

dozens of people to interpret the EPA's complex and sometimes costly regulations. At the same time, small communities often do not have even one full-time employee assigned to this task. This bill will assist small communities and give them a larger voice in drafting regulations with a fair and balanced approach considering they do not have the staff and financial capabilities of larger communities.

People who live in small towns are proud of their community and their environment. They want to comply with health and environmental standards in order to leave a healthy legacy for their children. However, small communities need flexibility in order to comply with environmental regulations as they seek to protect their families' health and the local environment. One size does not fit all.

The Small Communities Assistance Act would require each EPA regional office to establish a Small Town Ombudsman Office to advocate for small communities. The EPA would also develop a plan to increase the involvement of small communities in the regulatory review process so that EPA regulations would be flexible enough to account for small town priorities. The agency would be required to survey small communities and establish a small community advisory committee.

#### AN EXCELLENT SELECTION FOR TRANSPORTATION

### HON. STEPHEN HORN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 3, 2001*

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend President-elect Bush for his nomination of Norman Mineta to be his Secretary of Transportation. Secretary Mineta will bring great distinction to his new role, building upon a distinguished record in this body and as Secretary of Commerce.

When I was first elected to Congress, Norm Mineta took me, a freshman in the minority party, around Congress and helped in any way he could. I will never forget that generosity, but it reflects the personality of this true gentleman. Secretary Mineta has lived a life that we can all learn from.

Growing up in California during the Second World War, I have strong feelings on the national shame perpetrated against the Japanese-American community during the war. I have been touched by how that experience formed Norm, a period prominently displayed in his official portrait that hangs in 2167 Rayburn. Instead of harboring a lifetime of bitterness against the country that imprisoned him and his family, Norm Mineta devoted much of his life to public service. He has helped make this a better nation and has helped us become better Americans.

During his 21 year in this House, Norm Mineta was a leader in transportation policy and a fair chairman of what was then called the Committee on Public Works. He is well suited to leading the Department of Transportation in the years to come. Congress—and this body—has fought hard to provide our nation the funding necessary to address the many problems facing transportation today. Norm

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

Mineta brings with him the intelligence, experience, and disposition to be an excellent member of the new Administration and I look forward to working with him in the years to come.

### A BALANCED FEDERAL BUDGET

### HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 3, 2001*

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I fulfill the pledge I made to the citizens of southern Missouri to introduce and work tirelessly to pass an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, that requires a balanced Federal budget. Over the course of the past several decades, fiscal irresponsibility has produced a Federal debt that is fast approaching \$5 trillion. That's trillion, with a 't,' Mr. Speaker. A debt of \$5 trillion is a mind-boggling figure, but it can be placed in a much clearer perspective. A child born today immediately inherits nearly \$20,000 of debt, owed directly to Uncle Sam. The same is true for every American. The era of continuing annual budget deficits must end, and it is clear that the only way to restore conservative fiscal values to the Nation's budget is to pass the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.

The stakes in this debate could not be more important. The fiscal future of the United States hinges on the ability of Congress and the President to make the difficult choices required to balance the Federal budget. It's more than debating trillion dollar figures. It's about making our economy stronger and providing every working American family with a better chance to make ends meet. A balanced budget will strengthen every sector of our economy with lower interest rates that will help families stretch each paycheck further. Home mortgages, automobiles, and a better education will become more affordable to every working family, making the American Dream closer to reality for all.

Mr. Speaker, I am committed to working with my colleagues in the new Congress to see that the balanced budget constitutional amendment is passed and sent to the States for ratification. A constitutional amendment is certainly no substitute for direct action on the part of the Congress. However, we have seen time and time again instances where those who object to conservative fiscal responsibility find convenient excuses to deny the American people a balanced budget. An unbreakable enforcement mechanism is clearly needed to ensure that those who would continue to spend our children's future further into debt are not able to do so.

I also want to make plain that the Social Security trust fund has no place in this debate. The independent trust fund is a sacred trust between generations and must never be used to balance the budget or hide the true size of the deficit.

Commonsense conservatives in Congress and the American people are committed to balancing the budget. I look forward to working throughout this session with all of my colleagues and the White House to pass the balanced budget constitutional amendment on a

bipartisan basis. The obligations we owe to hard working American families, their children, and our Nation's future generations deserve nothing less than decisive action to preserve our future by balancing the budget. A constitutional amendment will ensure this outcome.

### RE-INTRODUCTION OF THE WOMEN'S RIGHT TO KNOW ACT

### HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 3, 2001*

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to reintroduce the Women's Right to Know Act in the 107th Congress. This bill ensures that so-called "gag rules" upon women's access to information about reproductive health care are not imposed by the states or the federal government in the future.

First imposed during the Reagan and Bush Administrations by executive order, the gag rule denied federal funds for any health care clinic whose employees counseled, referred, or discussed terminating a pregnancy in any way. If they did so, the clinic's funding could be rescinded. Congressional efforts to overturn these executive orders were vetoed.

Thankfully, President Clinton revoked the gag rule as his first order of business in 1993. While this marked major progress towards better health care for women on a federal level, it did not prevent individual states from imposing statewide gag rules. Currently two states, Missouri and Colorado, have gag rules—with Pennsylvania's state senate having considered and narrowly defeated a similar law in May 2000. With statewide "gag rules" on the rise, the threat of a federal "gag rule" being re-implemented looms on the horizon.

Contrary to the predictions of many gag rule supporters, abortion rates have not been linked to a reversal of this federal policy. In fact, abortion facts actually declined to a twenty year low in 1997 with record drops in teen pregnancy.

Leaving the gag rule to the power of executive order is playing Russian roulette with women's reproductive health. We must intensify our efforts to safeguard a women's access to full reproductive options and prevent the gag rule from ever being imposed again. For the government to withhold information about reproductive health care in a violation of our democratic principles and an unconscionable act against the people it intends to serve.

The Women's Right to Know Act ensures that gag rules will not be imposed by the states or the federal government in the future. This legislation states that no state or federal government entity may limit the right of any health care provider to supply, or any person to receive, factual information about reproductive health services, including family planning, prenatal care, adoption, or abortion.

The government has no right to interfere with private health care decisions. I therefore urge my colleagues to support this legislation and allow Americans to have access to complete, factual information so that can make informed decisions about their health care.